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## Notes from the GEM Chair

Vania Jordanova



I hope this letter finds you all safe and healthy. Due to the continuing uncertainties with the COVID-19 pandemic, the GEM Steering Committee (SC) decided, similarly to last year, to once again hold a fully virtual workshop. The GEM 2021 summer workshop will occur from July 26 to July 30, with Sunday July 25 as the Student Day. We will follow the original format of GEM, with plenary sessions in the morning, Focus Group (FG) breakout sessions in the afternoon, and poster sessions in the evening. We encourage you to take this opportunity to share your research, technical efforts, and ideas with the GEM community. Although we realize that the big celebration will happen once we are able to meet in person again, this year is the 30th anniversary of the first GEM meeting and we envision a program that celebrates this significant milestone!

It was great to see so many of you at our Virtual GEM (VGEM) 2020 workshop last year. Although in a virtual setting, we were able to hear excellent tutorials prepared by our plenary speakers and updates from our agency representatives, as well as great science debates in the FG oral and poster sessions. We learned about newly selected DRIVE Science Centers (SOLSTICE, CGS, CUSIA, and MACH), and are looking forward to seeing the innovations they lead to. We started important discussions about “Decadal future and beyond” as the community prepares for the next Solar and Space Physics Decadal Survey. We continued our Under-Represented Minority (URM) discussions with a talk on “How to make your PhD program more diverse”. The Student Day was a massive success with nice tutorials and several invited talks. In addition, we began much needed discussions about diversity and inclusion and mental health wellness. We were impressed by the amazing response and support from the community on these topics! As we continue these important discussions, we have posted more information about available resources on the GEM websites and on the Slack ([gemworkshop.slack.com](https://gemworkshop.slack.com)) “support-each-other” channel. I would like to thank the meeting organizers Chia-Lin Huang and Chris Mouikis and the UNH IT team, who have done a fantastic job with the organization of VGEM 2020, as well as the GEM SC and FG leaders, who have worked extremely hard to make this virtual workshop happen! It is clear that VGEM 2020 with about 700 participants (including more than 200 student registrants) was a huge success that exceeded all our expectations! We are strongly considering having a virtual component as part of GEM going forward, based on the success of VGEM 2020.

The changes in the GEM governance adopted during the past year have been reflected in the bylaws, including the establishment of an “Executive Council” to assist during times of crisis or emergency. The GEM SC held regular virtual meetings and the minutes from these telecons have been posted on the GEM Wiki ([gem.epss.ucla.edu](https://gem.epss.ucla.edu)) to increase transparency. The SC conducted several searches; please join me in welcoming Adam Kellerman as the new GEM Vice-Chair (Chair-Elect) and Ian Cohen as the new At-Large Member of the GEM SC. In addition, we welcomed Jesse Woodroffe who became the new NASA Liaison, replacing Mona Kessel. A decision was made to stagger the terms of the Research Area Coordinators (RACs) so that a major part of the SC does not rotate off at the same time. This allows the addition to the GEM SC of new members with fresh ideas every year, while simultaneously preserving institutional memory. I would like to thank the three RACs that are rotating off this year, Matina

Gkioulidou, Seth Claudepierre and Shin Ohtani, for their outstanding service over the past six years. We will open the search for new RAC positions in a few months. Please consider applying and/or nominating candidates!

The GEM community stands with the numerous professional and academic societies around the world that have pledged to support diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). As stated in the “GEM Inclusion Statement” posted on the GEM Wiki, the GEM SC and leadership commit to being intentionally and actively anti-racist through education and best practices. To take concrete actions, we formed a GEM DEI subcommittee that crafted a mission statement and several definitions of DEI to be used as reference. The DEI subcommittee is developing a strategic plan on DEI at GEM, following NSF requirements to have a plan for recruitment of attendees underrepresented in science. Please send us any suggestions you would like to see included in it. A GEM DEI happy hour was initiated to have a friendly chat about DEI related topics in the GEM community and the world at large. To join these conversations please look for announcements in the GEM Newsletter; everyone is welcome, from students and early-career researchers to senior leaders in the field - we need all perspectives. Also, to ensure that all participants in all GEM activities have an environment that is free from harassment, GEM has adopted an “Anti-Harassment Policy”, following the NSF “Sexual Harassment for Conferences” and “Conference Workshop Symposium Participant Notice”, please see the GEM Wiki for further details. Finally, the loss of Sam Bingham last year resonated deeply throughout the community and showed why we need to care about mental health, and in a greater sense, for our community. We created the “Sam Bingham Community Care Initiative”, to honor Sam’s memory and to help the community find supportive activities at GEM. To honor the life of GEM colleagues that we have lost in recent years, we started a new GEMstone section “In Memoriam” where the community can submit a photo and a short paragraph in their memory.

This issue of the GEMStone includes reports from the Focus Groups that are part of the five Research Areas that form the GEM program, as well as reports from the GEM Liaisons who represent our connection to the worldwide space science community. We thank Allison Jaynes and Lynn Kistler for compiling it. As several FGs are coming to an end this year, there will be a call for new FG proposals in the fall. We recommend that anyone interested in submitting a FG proposal reviews the advice from previous FG leaders on how to achieve a workshop style in their FG, which is available on the GEM Wiki.

We look forward to seeing you all virtually in July and please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.